small exchanges free of cost at the premises of bulk consumers where existing telephone lines number more than 100; and

(b) whether such facility is being considered for Chennai?

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI BENI PRASAD VERMA): (a) There is no offer to set up Small Exchanges free of cost. However, Small departmental Exchanges of 250 lines called Remote Line Units have been installed in Delhi. More such units have been planned. Telephone connections are provided as per rental and tariff applicable.

(b) Similar Remote Line Units are being planned for Chennai also.

Setting up of Second States Reorganisation Commission

*292. SHRI O.P. KOHLI: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the demand for new, smaller States is being raised once again in the country;

(b) whether there has been demand for setting up Second States Reorganisation Commission for division of larger States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan; and

(c) the policy proposed to be pursued by Government over this issue?

THE MINISTER OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI INDRAJIT GUPTA): (a) and (b) Although demands for statehood have been received from time to time, there is no specific demand for setting up a States Reorganisation Commission for division of larger States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan.

(c) The Government is committed to decentralisation and greater devolution of powers to the States, as a consequence of which the benefits of development are expected to percolate down much faster to hitherto underdeveloped regions of the country from where the demands for statehood are emanating.

Action taken under FERA against the Cotton traders

*293. SHRI SATISH PRADHAN: Will the Minister of TEXTILES be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that some traders have procured varieties of cotton from local market and sold it, in the international market at higher rate during 1995-96;

(b) if so, the quantity involved therein;

(c) whether the contracts were sent for action to Government by the Textile Commissioner of Mumbai for over invoicing; and

(d) the action taken under FERA by Government?

THE MINISTER OF TEXTILES (SHRI R.L. JALAPPA): (a) to (d) The prices of cotton in the international market have generally tended to be higher than the domestic cotton prices. As per policy, quota for Bengal Deshi Cotton, Staple cotton, soft waste and hard waste is allotted to traders on high price basis by the Textile Commissioner, if the applications received for higher quantity than the quantity actually available under the quota. This is with a view to maximising foreign exchange realisation.

In 1995-96, the Textile Commissioner had noted some cases where there was suspicion of alleged over-invoicing, and had referred the matter to the Enforcement Directorate for appropriate action.

Long-term programme for development of Major Ports

*294. SHRIMATI JAYANTI PATNAIK: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have drawn up any long term programme for the development of major ports;

(b) if so, the duration of this long-term programme;

(c) the outlay fixed for the development of ports under the long-term programme;

(d) the broad objectives for development of ports during the 8th Five Year Plan;